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SUBJECT: STRUCTURES AND CONFLICT IN BAGHDAD GOVERNANCE

Classified By: Deputy Political Counselor Robert Gilchrist for reasons
1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: Understanding Baghdad's government structure assists in understanding the violence that occurs when political rivalry turns into institutional conflict. Competition over the power to distribute and profit from government services is a major source of instability in the capital. National ministries deliver some services to Baghdad, while unique city institutions such as the Amanat (City Hall) deliver others. The Provincial Council and local councils struggle to voice their concerns to often unresponsive ministry officials. Poloffs, PRToffs and EPRToffs note that officials and residents currently attempt to resolve these institutional disputes on the ground, one by one, through a variety of different approaches -- sometimes through peaceful means, sometimes through violence -- depending on the relative power of local personalities and the involvement of political parties and their associated militias. The origins and development of the many governing institutions in Baghdad offer insight into the current conflicts that divide them. This is part of a series of cables from post and Baghdad PRT on the structure and challenges of Baghdad governance. END SUMMARY.

Administrative districts, the Governor, Provincial Councils

12. (SBU) Iraq's major administrative units of incorporated settlement include provinces, 'qadas' (akin to a counties or city boroughs) and 'nahias' (akin to townships or neighborhoods). The previous regime established Baghdad's current provincial boundary, comprised of 10 qadas subdivided into 32 nahias. In each of the 10 qadas, the Ba'ath Party appointed a lawyer to serve as 'qa'im makam' (roughly akin to 'district director' or 'ward boss'). These officials served as agents of the provincial governor, who was himself subject to the regime's leadership.

13. (SBU) CPA Order 71, Local Government Powers (2004), created a system where the Provincial Council (PC) chooses the Governor of the province, with the executive authority to 'direct, coordinate, and oversee implementation' of PC decisions. This directive has lent itself, in practice, to broad interpretation. The Governor coordinates provincial policies with ministries, and he engages national leaders on behalf of the province.

14. (SBU) The Governor exercises authority in Baghdad through the qa'im makams. Although the CPA granted local councils nominal authority to select their own qa'im makams, in practice most qa'im makam appointments come directly from the Governor's office. Confusion and conflict arise because the qa'im makams do not possess clear authority or purpose, and their geographic jurisdictions align with the boundaries of administrative districts, not those of political or service districts.

Service districts, the Mayor, and the Ministries

15. (SBU) The 'Amanat Baghdad' (City Hall) provides essential services (sewer, water, sanitation and other services) in metropolitan Baghdad. Several laws passed under the previous regime define the Amanat's role and status. Law 159 of 1969 and Law 151 of 1971 provide the basis for the structure and jurisdiction of the Amanat's departments and Law 16 of 1995 granted the Amanat the stature of a government ministry. The Amin or 'Mayor' of Baghdad heads the Amanat and shares the same rank as other ministers. It is important to note that the Amin has no authority over the police, the fire department, emergency responders and many other agencies operating within the city; they belong to separate ministries.

16. (SBU) Law 16 of 1995 also subdivided Baghdad city into nine service districts. The areas outside the jurisdiction of the Amanat, beyond a roughly 15 kilometer radius, are subdivided into six service districts and receive services from the Ministry for Municipalities and Public Works (MMPW).

(The MMPW also provides essential services to the rest of Iraq.) Each service district, or 'beladiya,' has a central municipal office led by a Director General (DG). The DG supervises a number of technical managers responsible for sewer, water, sanitation and other services within the district.

17. (SBU) Other ministries provide services to Baghdad's residents along completely different divisions. The Ministry of Interior (MoI) controls the city's police and fire departments and divides police and fire stations along the

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Tigris River, with a Karkh chief (west side) and a Rusafa chief (east side). The Ministry of Education divides Baghdad into four sections. Other ministries adopt different systems to subdivide the province.

District and Neighborhood Advisory Councils

18. (SBU) In 2003, the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) and USAID's Local Governance Program (LGP) created local councils as a venue for citizens to voice their concerns about the provision of services by the Amanat and the ministries. CPA organized these councils at the district and neighborhood level and called them, respectively, District Advisory Councils (DACs) and Neighborhood Advisory Councils (NACs). The DACs corresponded to the Amanat's plan of the city -- nine central service districts. In the outlying qadas, Qada Councils and Nahia Councils were formed in the six outlying service districts. These 15 'political districts' did not correspond to the 32 administrative districts established by the previous regime (and currently recognized by the Governor).

COMMENT: Fault lines of Political Rivalry

19. (C) These major divisions, between 'administrative', 'service', and 'political' districts define several major fault lines of institutional rivalry in Baghdad. The political masters of rival institutions often compete to expand their influence, even at the expense of their partisan colleagues in other institutions. Control of government institutions provides the ability to provide resources to friends, deny services to enemies and enrich yourself handsomely. Post will report on how this rivalry contributes to violence septel. END COMMENT.

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